In modern society, there is no longer an educational gap between men and women that once existed in the history of The United States. All genders have the same opportunity of education and employment within successful careers of their choosing. There is absolutely no reason a worker of one gender should receive any less compensation than any worker for the exact same position. The bill rests on the foundation of three main initiatives: a definition of “comparable work” to fairly assess salary inequality between employees, the inability for an employer to inquire about past salaries as an influencing factor in the hiring decision and the illegality of firing any employee for disclosing their salary to another employee.

The Bill
S.2119: An Act to establish pay equity

Elevator Speech
Our names are Sara Pipe-Mazo and Waiin Cheang and we are currently students at Brandeis University working with the Equal Pay Coalition. As two women graduating with business degrees from Brandeis University we will be entering the workforce at a disadvantage under the wage laws today. Currently, in the state of Massachusetts women are making a mere $0.82 to their male counterparts in comparable positions. The means to pay off our student loans, our rent, our necessities, we only have 82% of the funds that we should. That is as if we are received an 18% tax for being women. By creating guidelines to define comparable work and imposing higher financial and legal consequences for companies violating equal pay policies, we can ensure that households are bringing home the deserved amount of income to support families in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We will have proper channels to advocate for our deserved pay and receive up to three-year retroactive compensation — compensation that should have been ours from the beginning. You as a legislator have the ability to grant nearly half of the workforce, and us, the salaries we have worked hard to deserve. When Bill S.2119 comes

Sara Pipe-Mazo ’16 and Waiin Cheang ’17
to vote in the House of Representatives, vote favorably as your Senate counterparts have and diminish the inequitable wage gap.

**Letter to the Legislator**

I am a current student at Brandeis University working with the Equal Pay Coalition along with my partner, Sara Pipe-Mazo. I am not just any person, but one of your constituents, a person who relies on you as my voice in the House of Representatives. As a woman graduating with a business degree from Brandeis University, I will be entering the workforce at a disadvantage under the current wage laws today.

Currently, in the State of Massachusetts women make is approximately 82% to their male counterparts in comparable positions. That means to pay off my student loans, to pay for my bills and my cost of living, I will only have 82% of the resources that I should. In the competitive economy today, this is not just a wage gap that will exist in my first job, but it’ll follow me throughout my career.

Bill S.2119 An Act to establish pay equity is the only solution to remedy pay discrimination in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In order to do so the bill outlines the following provisions:

- Providing a definition of comparable work and encouraging employers to conduct internal reviews of their payroll
- Preventing employers from asking people about their salary history
- Protecting employees from termination for disclosing their compensation.
- Imposing higher financial consequences for employers violating the policies

The policies above can ensure that households in your jurisdiction and in the entire state of Massachusetts are receiving compensation they deserve to support their families. No woman, no mother, no wife and no child deserve less than another simply because of a patriarchal business society. With this legislation, we will have the proper channels to fight for our equality in the workforce and to fight for retroactive compensation for erroneous actions that violate these laws.

How can you as a legislator ensure that your constituents, like me, have a fair chance in our careers? We urge you to vote favorably as your Senate counterparts unanimously have when the bill comes to vote in the House of Representatives.

**House Ways and Means Script**

We stand before you today not just as two students, but also as two residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who have entrusted you to protect our interests and well-being as your constituents. As women graduating with business degrees from Brandeis University, it pains us to understand that we are entering the workforce at a disadvantage. Why you ask? Simply because of our gender—something to which we were born and over which we have no control.

Currently, in the State of Massachusetts women make approximately 82% to their male counterparts in comparable positions, with African-American women earning 66% and Latina women 54%. These statistics show that in some professions women barely make one half of men in similar roles. That is why we stand here before you today asking for your support of Bill S.2119 An Act to establish pay equity. This legislation is the only solution to remedy erroneous pay discrimination in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Bill S.2119 outlines a clear three-part solution to the problem of pay inequity. The first solution is that bill defines “comparable work” and encourages internal audits to guarantee rightful compensation based on industry standards. With the proper definition, it inhibits employers from the ability to circumvent prosecution based on industry standards or duties that both men and women may perform, but differ slightly in semantics. The internal audit component ensures that even if the employees work in different departments of large corporations, the departmental compensation is aligned with “comparable work” across the company as a whole.

The second solution is that employers are prohibited from inquiring about past salaries during the new-hire interview process. If it is believed that a worker has made less in a previous job than she should have, it could encourage new employers to continue to pay female workers less than the going rate due to lack of knowing any differently. On the contrary, discovery of higher salaries may dissuade an employer from hiring a particular candidate if said employer is unwilling to pay an equal salary.

Lastly, the legislation prohibits employers to terminate employment due to the disclosure of salary to their colleagues and co-workers. The ability for employees to openly communicate about wages, without fear of being fired, is crucial in the battle to ensure that wage disparity is eliminated from the workplace. If employees fear discussing the details, it may never be proven that two employees of “comparable” positions are, in fact, making different salaries due to gender discrimination.

Some may argue that there are potential unintended consequences of the bill stemming from the difficulty of establishing merit-based and gender discriminatory pay differentiation. Senator Karen Spilka defends the legislation
and ensures that: “Variations in pay may exist for comparable work if the difference is based on a bona fide merit system, a system that measures earnings based on production or sales, differences based on geographic location or education, training or experience reasonably related to the particular job.” The bill is not arguing against merit-based salary increases, it is arguing for these differentiations to be just and independent of suppressive gender roles in the workplace.

As it currently stands, this bill is one of the few “revenue neutral” bills that exist in legislation today. There are hefty monetary fines in place; however, the government is not responsible for paying for the legal fees associated with pay equity claims. It is the responsibility of the company to cover all legal fees involved in these situations, including those of the courts, payable to the Commonwealth. In fact, the internal audit provision within the bill aims to save the Commonwealth from lengthy gender discrimination suits and allow for resources to be allocated to other pressing issues at hand.

To add a final quote from Senator Spilka: “if no additional action is taken, it would be another 42 years before men and women were paid equally.” By that time, we would be 62 years old, nearing the age of retirement when we finally receive the compensation we deserve, if this bill does not go into effect. Please don’t let us be the victims of pay inequity for the entirety of our careers. We urge you to vote this bill favorably out of committee and grant us, and the rest of your constituents, the equality we deserve.

■ Excerpts from Campaign Journals

Waiin

One of the difficulties we had for the project was looking for stories. We all know that stories or someone’s experience create emotional impact. A good story will help people understand problems easily. At first, we tried to look for story from Brandeis students. But it was hard to look for a good story because we all worked at the entry level which everyone’s compensation is the same.

Sara

When the bill discusses comparable work, the story of AnneMarie Duchon has been so incredibly helpful in my lobbying efforts. Representatives try to escape the conversation because being against pay equity is a poor political move, so they say there’s no way to compare. AnnMarie and her male counterpart went to the same undergraduate college, were RAs together, graduated on the same day with the same major and GPA, started working in the same office on the same day and both were promoted on the same day to their current positions. As AnnMarie said, “it’s not apples and oranges”. There is no way to deny that they were engaged in comparable work. Her story is a clear-cut example of wage disparity.

What I expected to be a 10 minute short meeting, as I experienced during Equal Pay Lobby Day, we spoke with Michael, a legislative aide for Representative Rogers, for over an hour before having to excuse ourselves for another meeting. This was the first time someone in the legislation spoke frankly to us about the legislation. Not only did he address the primary reasons to support the bill, but explained the politics behind a bill like this and introduced us to AIM, a lobbying agency that opposes the bill. He was frank in that nobody will outright say that they don’t believe in pay equity so we shouldn’t be looking for opposition to the bill, but more apprehensive supporters and how to make them more active in the bill process. He also discussed how to frame certain statistics and buzz words when we talk to politicians and how they may counter what we have to say. Overall, in terms of lobbying and the specificities of the process, I think this was one of the most helpful meetings throughout the semester.

■ Op-Ed

Waiin

Every Woman Deserves Equal Pay (edited version)

On March 31st, members of the United States women’s national soccer team filed a federal complaint alleging wage discrimination, saying they are paid far less than their male counterparts. In 2014, the men’s team earned a total of $9 million for losing in Round of 16, while the women’s team got only $2 million for winning their entire tournament.

What the pay equity in Massachusetts? On January 28, 2016, Bill S2119, An Act to Establish Pay Equity passed unanimously in the Senate. This bill aims to close the gender wage gap by ensuring equal pay for comparable work, establishing pay transparency, and requiring fairness in hiring process.

Prior to this legislation Massachusetts was a pioneer in pay equity since it was the first states to establish for equal pay, the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act was passed in 1945. Eighteen years after the legislation, the federal Equal Pay Act was passed resulting in equal pay as federally mandated requirement and law in 1963.

However, in Massachusetts, 42 years after the federal law passed. The disparities still exist. Women are earning 82 percent of what men earn for the same position, and that gap increases for minorities. Latino women earn 54 cents and African America women earn 66 cents for every dollar earned by men.
In historical parlance, the discount of women’s labor was decided because women were less educated and working just for “pin money”. In fact, this scenario does not exist anymore. As of 2013, 40% of household with children under 18 included a mother serving the primary provider for the their families. The “family logistic” problem that women did not need to be protected so much is not the case anymore. Also, younger women are receiving the same level of education as their male counterparts; the occupation choices for females, are more diverse than our earlier generations. Women are employed in managerial, professional, technical and administrative support positions. At some engineering colleges, like Massachusetts Institute of Technology and California Institute of Technology, women are admitted at a higher rate than men (8% higher in the former and 10% in the latter). And yet, the gender pay gap is 90 cents for younger, white, college-educated worker at the beginning of their career after controlling for education level and hours worked, according to Harvard economist Claudia Godin. Women still earn less when they are not less educated compared to their male co-workers.

The legislation is not asking women to be paid more but the same amount as men. Some people, like Mark Gallagher, the executive vice president of the Massachusetts High Technology Council, argue it would make it harder for companies to do business in Massachusetts. Should the companies deprive women from compensation to make them easier to operate their business while women are working as hard as their male counterparts? Of course not. Being a female should not put someone at disadvantage when she negotiates for her salary.

Groups also argue that the state law passed in 1945 and the federal law passed 1963 already prohibit gender-based discrimination in salaries and hiring. Those groups believe there is no need for this bill. However, it has been almost fifty years since the federal law passed and we clearly need to update the bill. The latest version provides the definition of comparable work and prohibits employers from asking the salary history of the candidates. This bill is encouraging pay equity rather than mandating salary reviews by gender.

Who wins by having practice of unequal pay? Only the corporations and the businesses. The families of any female worker lose income and the government also loses tax.

Karen Spilka, sponsor of the bill with Patricia Jehlen, said, “If no additional action is taken, it would be another 42 years before men and women were paid equally.” The existing laws are not enough to protect compensation and to guarantee competitiveness of women. Such exploitation of women is happening every day. These discriminative situations should be ended now.

Do you want the corporations to keep exploiting your families? Do you want your daughter to be paid less because of her gender regardless of career and educational level? Even though this bill would be another complexity to businesses, we have to do something to end this unfair scenario. Contact your representative now and ask them to vote favorably for this bill! Remember that this bill is for all the families in Massachusetts.

Sara

We Run The World: Pay Us Accordingly

In my childhood I continuously encountered the encouragement that I could be anything I wanted to be when I grew up. I could be an astronaut, a firewoman or the first female President of The United States. Nearly a decade later the optimism of a female president has come to fruition. In this amazing feat for the female gender, imagine if Hillary Clinton wins the election. Imagine if we truly do have our next female president. Now imagine telling her that despite making history, despite rising above the competition, Hillary Clinton will only make 82 percent of what Barack Obama made.

She might respond by only doing 82 percent of the work of Barack Obama. That would make it fair. There’s an arms race in North Korea? No can-do, the president used up all 82 percent of her work for the day, so that will have to wait for tomorrow.

Hillary would not be the only woman in this country receiving inequitable wages for comparable work. The women’s national soccer team is currently suing the National League over disputes of pay inequity. Sure, they may “play like girls”; however, in today’s world, playing like a girl attributes to being the first in the world, but being paid nearly 40% less than the other “boys” in the game.

The women’s national soccer league has one three World Cups. The men’s national soccer team is ranked 30th in the world. The only cups in the men’s soccer team are of a protective nature.

So why are they making more than the women’s team if they are clearly the lesser of the two teams? Do they play more games? Do they generate more revenue? Neither. The women’s national team plays more games than the men’s and provides nearly $20 million more in revenue. They are not paid less for any logical reason. They are paid less because they are women.

Outside of the public sphere, residents of Massachusetts are facing equally inequitable pay discrimination. White women in Massachusetts make 82 cents, African-American women make 66 cents and Latina women make 54 cents of every dollar that a man earns.
Women who are engaged in comparable work to their male counterparts are making less every single day; however, employers find this acceptable. Women have their husbands to support the family, their wages are just “extras”. There are only 40 percent of households in Massachusetts where mothers are the primary provider for the family. Additionally, it would be unheard of, especially in Massachusetts, for there to be two women in a household instead of a man and a woman.

Many may argue that women have fewer expenses in general, so it evens out. It is not like there are expenses specifically targeting women, like a tampon tax or anything of that nature. Time and time again women are stagnated in society for no other reason than their gender identity. It doesn’t matter if they might be more qualified and more competent.

From a janitor to the President of the United States, women are making strides every single day. No matter how far they stride, or how long they kick, they are at a disadvantage in the workforce. This is the 21st century and blatant discrimination should no longer be tolerated.

I wasn’t told that I could be 82 percent of what I wanted to be growing up. Hillary Clinton won’t do just 82 percent of her job. The women’s national league won’t score 82 percent less goals. It is time for employers to stop valuing us any differently. According to top female artist and icon, Beyoncé, “we run the world” and it’s about damn time that we start being paid that way.

Sara Pipe-Mazo is a junior at Brandeis University majoring in Business concentrating in Accounting and minoring in Legal Studies, Economics and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.

**Update**

On August 1, 2016, the bill was adopted and signed by Governor Baker.

**For more information**

View the Bill:  
malegislature.gov/Bills/189/Senate/S2119

Equal Pay Coalition: maequalpaycoalition.com