



Courtney Leyes Discusses Mississippi's Equal Pay Bill in Forbes

News

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After the Mississippi state legislature voted March 30 to pass a bill that would require employers to offer equal pay for equal work, Forbes interviewed **Courtney Leyes** about its implications for both employers and employees. The vote, which now heads to the governor's desk for approval, would end years of efforts to pass a pay equality measure in the state.

As Mississippi becomes the last state in the nation to enact an equal pay law or a non-discrimination statute that impacts employment, federal circuit court decisions have been split on whether prior salary may be one of the "factors other than sex" that can be used to explain differences in pay.

By explicitly listing these factors rather than leaving the interpretation open-ended, says Courtney, the new bill could reinforce a "vicious cycle" for women's pay. For example, research has shown that women tend to ask for less or are concerned that if they are too assertive in negotiations, they disrupt gender norms in ways that may penalize them.

The new bill "gives employers more outs, and more options to defend those claims," she said. "The bill is telling Mississippi courts that these are three valid exceptions, rather than leaving it up to the courts to interpret it."

Read the full article in [*Forbes*](#).

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